

TOP SECRET

25X

1 October 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 1 October 1969

ADD/I reported on the improved condition of [] of OSR (see Morning Meeting Minutes of 29 September 1969).

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Godfrey pointed to reports on the appearance of Mao and Lin in public and on the state of Nasser's health.

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D/ONE briefed on the topic of distribution of NIEs, which will be discussed at the 2 October USIB meeting. He provided the Director and the DDCI with a memorandum displaying the quantity of NIEs published and distributed.

D/ONE noted that he anticipates no particular problem with SNIE 64.2-1-69 on Nigeria but added that paragraph 59 of NIE 11-3, Soviet Strategic Defenses, will call for discussion.

DD/S briefed on the Director of Training's review of training courses and highlighted that the Intelligence Review Course is being changed into a seminar format with broader based participation. In response to the DD/P's question the DD/S mentioned that this course does replace the DD/I Review Course.

Carver cited indications of GVN restlessness with respect to their understanding of U. S. withdrawal plans.

Carver noted that Ambassador Sullivan did an excellent job in briefing Career Trainees []

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Carver commented on the excerpt of Townsend Hoopes' new book which appears in the October issue of The Atlantic.

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DD/S&T reported that the evaluation group being formed under the DDR&E is scheduled to be "sworn in" and said that he will present material on U. S. capabilities for unilateral verification.

[REDACTED] 25X

DD/P noted that Kent Crane will be here for a luncheon briefing today.

[REDACTED] 25X

The Director called Goodwin's attention to the AP account of Reverend Lindstrom's comments on the Green Berets.

The Director briefed on yesterday's 303 Committee meeting.

The Director advised Carver that Mr. William Casey was with OSS. Carver commented that he will be seeing Mr. Casey on Thursday before the latter's trip to the Far East.

The Director asked the DD/P for information on when Ray Cline will be returning to Washington.

[REDACTED] 25X

L. K. White

TOP SECRET

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Johnson Aides Almost Quit Over War

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27—Several high officials in President Lyndon B. Johnson's Administration were ready to resign in protest against the Vietnam policy that the President was directing in early 1968, according to Townsend W. Hoopes, who was then Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Mr. Hoopes recalls that Paul H. Nitze, Deputy Secretary of Defense, told Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford that he preferred not to continue in office rather than to defend the Administration's policy publicly.

The fact that Mr. Nitze and others did not resign,

Mr. Hoopes believes, was due to Mr. Clifford's success in persuading the President to reverse course in Vietnam.

Mr. Clifford's efforts culminated in the President's televised address March 31 in which he announced a halt in the bombing of most of North Vietnam, appealed to Hanoi to begin negotiations and withdrew from the impending Presidential election campaign.

Mr. Hoopes, in the October issue of *The Atlantic* and in his forthcoming book, "The Limits of Intervention," adds to the historical record many details of the activity of the second echelon that influenced Mr. Clifford and led to the turnaround in Vietnam

policy in 1968.

Mr. Hoopes said today that he had discussed parts of his manuscript with Mr. Clifford, Mr. Nitze and other colleagues of his Pentagon days to insure the accuracy of his account.

Mr. Hoopes's book, published by David McKay Company, Inc., is scheduled to appear shortly amid rising dissent over the war in the Congress and on the nation's campuses. It is expected to give added impetus to advocates of a complete withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam.

Mr. Hoopes wrote: "Deliberate, orderly but complete

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'68 Pentagon Aide Tells of Dissension on Vietnam

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withdrawal has become, in my judgment, the only practical course open to the United States, if we are to restore our foreign policy to coherence, regain our psychological balance, alleviate the deep-seated strife in our society, and re-order our national priorities in ways that will win the support of a large majority of our own people."

"If we can forthrightly acknowledge the basic, unpalatable truth—that our intervention in 1965 was misconceived, that viewed through cold, clear eyes it could not be justified on the grounds that a vital national interest was at stake—then we can bite the bullet on Vietnam," he wrote.

Mr. Hoopes was on the staff of the House Armed Services Committee in 1947, then on the staff of the Secretary of Defense until 1953. After 11 years in private business he returned to the Pentagon as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for international security affairs. In October, 1967, he became Under Secretary of the Air Force, a post he held until February, 1969.

By the end of 1967, Mr. Hooper said, President Johnson was "probably unaware that his subcabinet group and an influential segment of the foreign military bureaucracy were increasingly disenchanted with his leadership, frustrated by their own impotence, and incipiently rebellious."

The Tet offensive of February, 1968, "performed the curious service of fully revealing the doubters and dissenters to each other, as in a lightning flash," Mr. Hoopes said. Mr. Nitze "suddenly spoke out on 'the unsoundness of continuing to reinforce weakness,' and wrote a paper that argued that our policy in Vietnam had to be placed in the context of other U.S. commitments around the world," he wrote.

'Fell Off the Boat'

Paul C. Warnke, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Mr. Hoopes wrote, "thought Tet showed that our military strategy was 'foolish to the point of insanity.'"

Mr. Hoopes added: "Alain Enthoven, whose systems-analysis office had remained curiously on the outer edges of Vietnam policy, confided that 'I fell off the boat when the troop level reached 17,000.'"

"Other influential civilians expressed their strong belief that the Administration's policy was at a dead end," he added.

"Discussing the general situation with Warnke about this time," Mr. Hoopes wrote, "I argued that, unless the situation could be turned around, someone was going to have to resign, 'with drama,' for at least two simple reasons—as a matter of personal integrity, to avoid being dragged any further in the wake of a policy one felt to be fundamentally wrong; and as a means of breaking the deceptive facade of supposed governmental unity, and thus of contributing new force and substance to the public debate."

They Discussed Resigning

"I thought one resignation might produce a modest chain reaction of perhaps half a dozen, and I was perfectly willing to be first," Mr. Hoopes said. "Warnke was thinking along similar lines, but he put the choice of resignation farther down the road. He preferred, first, a vigorous renewal of the effort to turn the situation around, in the context of the Tet offensive. He said, 'If we wade in with both feet, we can perhaps make a difference; and if we fail, maybe they will do us the honor of firing us.'"

Mr. Hoopes said that on Feb. 13, two weeks before Mr. Clifford formally became Secretary of Defense, he wrote a long letter to Mr. Clifford outlining his views on Vietnam.

Mr. Hoopes said that the reappraisal of the Vietnam policy began late in February, 1968, when Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the American commander in Vietnam, requested 206,000 more troops through Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"That produced an undiluted expression of the true military desideratum—no less than a 40 per cent increase in a force level already at 510,000," Mr. Hoopes said. "This was an event that galvanized the Pentagon civilians, who were for the first time able to assert their strong antiescalation position in a favorable psychological and managerial climate."

'Request Was a Catalyst'

"The Westmoreland request," he said, "was a catalyst that made serious reappraisal unavoidable, and Clifford's arrival meant that new channels of communication were now available to debate the issues." Mr. Clifford succeeded Robert S. McNamara as Secretary of Defense on March 1, 1968.

Mr. Hoopes said: "There has been a curious, retrospective effort by the

military leaders to argue that an actual request for 206,000 made. That figure, they now claim, merely represented one of several possible force levels in a wide spectrum of 'normal contingency plans.'"

On taking office, Mr. Hoopes said, Mr. Clifford "moved immediately to broaden the inquiry's frame of reference [on the troop request] by stating that, to him, the basic question was whether the U.S. should continue to follow the same course in Vietnam."

Through early March, efforts to persuade President Johnson to change his policy met with defeat and the group of which Mr. Hoopes was a member was "profoundly discouraged," Mr. Hoopes wrote.

"Hope now lay in the fact that one strong and important Cabinet officer, Clifford, was increasingly questioning the assumption that military victory was achievable, and was showing himself receptive to further argument and analysis," he said.

He Declined to Testify

When the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, during March hearings on foreign aid, asked Mr. Clifford to testify, he declined on the group that he was too new to office and asked Mr. Nitze, with the President's concurrence, to take his place.

But, Mr. Hoopes said, Mr. Nitze "advised Clifford that he was not in a position to defend the Administration's Vietnam policy" before the committee.

Instead of anyone from the Pentagon testifying, Mr. Clifford called on Senator J. W. Fulbright, the committee chairman, and "spoke of the ongoing appraisal within the Administration and of his own deepening doubts with respect to the current policy," Mr. Hoopes wrote. Senator Fulbright agreed that no one from the Pentagon need testify at that time.

Speech Was Changed

Late in March, Administration officials began drafting the speech for the President to give on March 31. The early drafts were clearly hawkish and that tone remained until March 28, when Mr. Clifford met with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and others in Mr. Rusk's office to polish the draft, Mr. Hoopes said.

At the meeting Mr. Clifford argued that the President should not give the speech in the original form and persuaded Harry McPherson, the President's speech writer, to prepare

an alternate draft, Mr. Hoopes said. Through the next three days, that draft gradually turned into the speech that the President delivered.

Mr. Hoopes did not know the outcome of the debate until the President spoke on television.

"At home in McLean, Va., I was unaware as to how the battle of the 'war' and 'peace' drafts had finally been decided," he wrote, "but expecting the worse, I worked at polishing a letter of resignation for submission the following morning."

"Immediately after the President's address," he said, "the electricity failed throughout the house. I found a cold bottle of champagne in the cellar and for the next hour sat on the bedroom floor with my wife, sipping thoughtfully by the light of a single candle."